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Chairman: Mr. Wolfe ..... (Jamaica)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 66: Promotion and protection of the rights of children (*continued*) (A/62/297 and 319; A/C.3/62/2)

(a) Promotion and protection of the rights of children (*continued*) (A/62/182, 209 and 228)

(b) Follow-up to the outcome of the special session on children (*continued*) (A/62/259)

1. **Mr. Bin Momen** (Bangladesh) said that his country had prioritized addressing the needs and problems of children and had also taken all necessary measures to guarantee the human rights and fundamental freedoms of children with disabilities. Constitutionally committed to children's advancement, Bangladesh was a State party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and was one of the few countries to ratify and report on both Optional Protocols to the Convention. His Government had implemented two national plans of action on children and was in the process of implementing a third, keeping in view the Millennium Development Goals and the World Fit For Children Action Plan. It had also increased its budgetary investment in children's issues over the previous three decades.

2. Facing an enormous gender gap in education at the start of the 1990s, Bangladesh had achieved 100 per cent parity in primary and secondary school enrolment by the end of 2006. Education for girls was free up to grade 12, and various incentives had increased girls' enrolment and prevented dropout cases. Material incentives for education and microcredit programmes had contributed to the well-being of children, particularly the girl child, and his country was currently focusing on improving the quality of education at all levels.

3. The elimination of child labour was being pursued through creation of viable opportunities, rehabilitation and skill development and by providing parents with access to microcredit to reduce dependency on their children. Child labour laws had been strictly enforced in the garment industry, with the support of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations Children's' Fund (UNICEF). Further, Bangladesh was formulating a national policy on child labour, and it was a party to the ILO Convention No. 182 concerning the worst forms of child labour.

4. Although HIV/AIDS prevalence was low, his Government had adopted a national policy on HIV/AIDS with a particular focus on infected and affected children. A project addressed the needs of street and abandoned children, and stringent domestic legislation had been enacted to eliminate trafficking in persons, particularly children, and to protect children, particularly the girl child, against all forms of violence, discrimination, abuse and exploitation. Child mortality, malnutrition and iodine deficiency disorders had declined, polio had been eradicated altogether, and maternal health had improved. For several years, Bangladesh had been the main sponsor of the resolution on the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World and hoped that countries would continue to support its initiative.

5. **Mr. Murtaza** (Pakistan) said that there were persistent challenges in meeting the targets set out at the twenty-seventh special session of the General Assembly, guaranteeing healthy lives and quality education to children; protecting them from abuse, violence and exploitation; and combating HIV/AIDS. Children suffered the most from armed conflict, and migrants, refugees and internally displaced children as well as those living under foreign occupation remained the most vulnerable. The report of the Secretary-General pointed out that many of those challenges were rooted in discrimination that persisted between children in developing and developed countries, among children from ethnic minorities, and most pervasively between boys and girls because of entrenched gender discrimination in all societies.

6. Pakistan was committed to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015, including those that related to child health and education. His country was a party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, including its two Protocols, and to the International Labour Organization's core convention on child labour. Children constituted 48 per cent of the population of Pakistan. Steps taken by his Government to promote the rights of the child included the establishment of a national commission for child welfare and development, responsible for promoting the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child; a ban on corporal punishment in schools; the establishment of a minimum age for marriage for boys and girls; a ban on trafficking of children; the provision of free education up to tenth grade; a

national plan of action that aimed to achieve universal primary education by 2015; and eradication of child labour, which had been achieved in the soccer ball and carpet industries.

7. **Ms. Blum** (Colombia) said that national actions had been taken in relation to the World Fit For Children Action Plan and that significant advances had been made. A new code on childhood and adolescence had entered into force the previous May, updating national regulations relating to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The law entailed measures that provided complete protection for children and adolescents, including guarantees for the exercise of rights and freedoms. The shared responsibility of the family, society, and the State in promoting and protecting children's rights were central principles of the new code.

8. Various policies and reforms being implemented had an impact on children. The policies addressed children's needs in early childhood, promoting family life and countering domestic violence, eliminating child labour, assisting street children and youth, and promoting sexual and reproductive health, aiming for a reduction in unwanted adolescent pregnancies. Advances in education would allow for the achievement of universal primary education by 2010, as well as a substantial increase in middle and higher education. Further, subsidies were granted to poor families in order to provide nutrition for children under the age of seven and education for children between 7 and 18 years of age.

9. The Colombian Institute of Family Welfare was also implementing a programme that attended to the needs of children and adolescents removed from illegal armed groups. Further, her Government had strengthened strategies for preventing illegal armed groups from using children, through childhood policies implemented at the departmental and municipal level, with support from UNICEF, ILO, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and some States. Colombia had incorporated the MDGs into its development plans and policies.

10. Her delegation had taken note of the report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict (A/62/228) and of the strategic review of the Machel Study. In the preparation of a comprehensive report on the findings, States should be allowed to express their considerations on the recommendations made. Colombia reaffirmed the importance of continuing the follow-up on the recommendations made in the report of the independent expert for the United Nations study on violence against children (A/62/209). Nevertheless, the recommendation to appoint a special representative for that issue should be analysed more carefully, as every effort should be made to avoid any duplication or overlapping of functions.

11. The commemorative high-level plenary meeting devoted to the follow-up to the outcome of the special session on children in December was going to give States the opportunity to reaffirm the commitments made in 2002. The main outcome of that meeting should be the strengthening of international cooperation in initiatives promoting the rights of children.

12. **Ms. Park** Enna (Republic of Korea) said that, although many countries had established national action plans on children's issues, much remained to be done in order to create a world fit for children, where children's rights were fully guaranteed. Children around the world were exposed to armed conflicts, sexual exploitation, recruitment as child soldiers and other forms of violence, malnutrition and infant mortality. Those situations constituted an infringement of their rights. Therefore, an increased commitment and stronger international partnership were required to reach the goals of the 2002 special session of the General Assembly on children.

13. The issue of violence against children should be fully addressed. While it commended the work of the Committee on the Rights of the Child and UNICEF initiatives in protecting children, her delegation supported more consolidated and coordinated efforts by the United Nations system to end violence against children, including the appointment of a Special Representative. The Republic of Korea strongly supported the recommendations made in the report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict (A/62/228), which included ending impunity, prioritizing children's security, stopping gender-based violence and integrating children's rights into peacemaking and peacebuilding. Her delegation also emphasized that disabled children's enjoyment of their full rights was an indispensable part of the World Fit For Children campaign.

14. The World Fit For Children Action Plan served as a guideline for her Government's domestic policies on children. A committee had been established under the Prime Minister's office in 2004 to coordinate national policies on children, monitor the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and encourage cooperation among various ministries relating to children. The Ministry of Health and Welfare had developed a monitoring system to prevent the violation of children's rights. A child rights monitoring centre had also been established to prevent child trafficking, child prostitution and child pornography. Lastly, the National Youth Commission had taken measures to raise public awareness in order to eliminate the abuse and exploitation of young people.

15. **Mr. Liu** Zhenmin (People's Republic of China) said that, despite the steady progress made by the international community on the issue of promoting and protecting the rights of children, numerous challenges remained. Attention should be given to the root causes of violations of children's rights. His Government called upon developed countries to share greater responsibilities and obligations and to assist developing countries with resources and technology in order to build a sound environment for the healthy development of children around the world.

16. As China's children made up one fifth of the world's child population, his Government bore a major responsibility in the promotion and protection of children's rights. In its efforts to implement the MDGs, China had worked to fulfil its international obligations through the Programme for the Development of Chinese Children, promulgated in 2001. The Programme was a national plan of action on children's issues, and the 2006 assessment made by the State Council's National Committee on Women and Children indicated that as of 2005, the implementation of the programme was on the whole satisfactory.

17. China had put in place the basic domestic legislative and regulatory system for the protection of children's rights, which consisted of the Constitution, the civil code and laws on adoption, the protection of minors and compulsory education. Further, a system of national institutions had been established to work on children's issues, headed by the National Working Committee on Children and Women. Specific action plans had also been adopted to address difficulties in children's development. The Government had strengthened its services for orphaned, disabled and homeless children and had worked to protect the rights of migrant children. It had also sought to prevent and control the spread of HIV/AIDS and assist AIDS orphans, and to protect children, especially girls, from abuse, exploitation and violence.

18. China had ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1991 and the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography and was working to ratify the Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict. The Committee on the Rights of the Child had highly appraised China's reports on the implementation of the Convention. The previous June, his Government had enacted a newly revised law on the protection of minors, incorporating the relevant provisions of the Convention and guaranteeing their basic rights to life, development, protection, participation and education. China was in the midst of an economic and social transition. It recognized that much remained to be done to protect the rights of the child and would continue to work tirelessly in order to do so.

19. **Ms. Al-Obaidli** (Qatar) said that children's issues were one of her Government's main development priorities and had been addressed by its various ministries, aiming to ensure children's full development and participation in age-appropriate activities, as well as their protection from all forms of violence and exploitation. The Qatari Constitution and relevant legislation enshrined children's rights to education, health care and protection.

20. Significant progress had been made in providing primary health-care services to mothers and children over the previous four decades. Education coverage had also been extended to cover the entire school cycle. Further, Qatar had also improved social and economic welfare for all classes, thus reducing in child mortality rates as well as increasing school enrolment rates for both genders. Social assistance services were provided to all Qatari citizens. National economic prosperity had resulted in an enhanced standard of living for all.

21. The Superior Council on the Family had undertaken national plans for the protection of the family, foremost among them a national strategy for children's issues for the years 2008 to 2013. The three-part strategy consisted of ensuring health, education and protection for children. Further, a school

literacy network had been established to enrich children's cultural environment by holding regional and national competitions in reading and writing. Lastly, Qatar reaffirmed its commitment to consolidating its national action plan in accordance with the relevant international conventions and protocols.

22. **Mr. Yousfi** (Algeria) said that, despite the considerable progress made globally in ensuring respect for the rights of the child, especially in the areas of education and a reduction in child mortality from disease, children continued to be the victims of abuse, exploitation and violence. The report of the Secretary-General drew attention to the short and long-term effects of violence on children. There was no lack of political will among the international community for the protection of children, as that commitment had resulted in numerous declarations and legally binding international instruments with almost universal accession, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The forthcoming high-level dialogue should provide an opportunity to identify obstacles preventing that political will from being put into action.

23. Children were Algeria's most precious asset, and the Government placed priority on their education, mental and physical health care, and protection. Accordingly, it had ratified a number of international and regional conventions for the protection of children. Programmes for infectious disease prevention and control, vaccination and birth spacing had been successful in reducing the child mortality rate. Algeria also attached great importance to the family as the most natural environment for the rearing of children and provided social support to families. Abandoned children were placed with adoptive families under the *kafala* system to give them foster care and integrate them into society. His country's investment in a system of free and compulsory primary education, which did not discriminate between boys and girls, had achieved 94 per cent enrolment in 2005. The school enrolment effort was accompanied by social support measures providing grants for school supplies and meals and transportation for students in remote areas.

24. His Government took the problem of violence against children very seriously, because of its serious impact on their physical and mental health, and had developed a national strategy which highlighted the multiple aspects of the issue. It also conducted regular evaluations of its implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in the context of its national human rights advisory committee, and disseminated the provisions of the Convention through civics education classes in the schools and public information campaigns.

25. **Mr. Rachkov** (Belarus) said that the protection of children's interests was a prerequisite for sustainable development. Belarus was party to key international agreements on children's rights, which were reflected in domestic legislation. The national plan of action for 2004-2010 was informed by the outcome of the special session on children, and young people had participated in its elaboration. There had been a significant strengthening of the monitoring role of the National Commission on the Rights of the Child in 2006.

26. Concerted efforts were being undertaken to improve the quality of children's health care and to reduce child mortality, which, at 14 per 1,000 live births, was the lowest in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Vaccination coverage in Belarus stood at 99 per cent. Social services had been also significantly strengthened, with 20,000 children fostered or adopted over the past five years, allowing for the closure of several orphanages. Penalties for parental neglect had been tightened, with parents responsible for funding their children's care within foster families. Juvenile crime had fallen by 10 per cent since 2005 following the introduction of relevant legislative measures, and the proportion of minors sentenced to imprisonment had also fallen by 40 per cent in recent years. Belarus attached great importance to the strengthening of international cooperation on children's rights.

27. **Mr. Chernenko** (Russian Federation) said that, although international cooperation was being strengthened, the goals set by the special session on children had yet to be fully achieved by the international community. In the context of the Organization's ongoing reforms and in an effort to avoid duplication, the establishment of any new bureaucratic structures should be approached with caution. It was more important to strengthen child protection mechanisms at all levels than to establish yet more highly paid posts for international civil servants.

28. A programme for children for 2007-2010 was a key component of federal social policy. A commission

coordinating government efforts in support of children also held sessions in outlying districts to raise local awareness of children's issues. The importance attached by the Russian Federation to the role of the family was reflected in the President's declaration of 2008 as the Year of the Family. A children's national television channel had also been launched for the first time in the country's history. The realization of the rights of children was a universal aspiration which had the potential to unite the efforts of Member States at all levels.

29. **Ms. Perez Alvarez** (Cuba) said that the children of the world were threatened by wars, hunger, greed and inequality. In the years since the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the special session of the General Assembly on children, notwithstanding the efforts of many Governments and organizations, little progress had been made in favour of children. Cuba, a small Caribbean island blockaded by the United States Government for more than 45 years, could show substantive achievements in all areas of children's development because of the resources devoted to education, health and care for disabled children. Cuba had one of the world's lowest child mortality rates, at 5.3 per thousand live births, as a result of efforts to build a health-care system that guaranteed quality of life beginning with pregnancy care.

30. Children had the right to free, universal and compulsory education; the literacy rate was 99.6 per cent. Those achievements were the result of the political will of the Government and the extraordinary effort by the people, despite the dire consequences of the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States, which was the most serious form of violence against Cuban children. The international community must put an end to all forms of abuse of children; no one should allow themselves to sleep peacefully at night while children were being victimized or suffering from hunger and neglect around the world. While the report of the independent expert for the United Nations study on violence against children (A/62/209) was valuable, her delegation would also welcome his consideration of the impact of unilateral coercive measures on the children of the world.

31. **Mr. Hannesson** (Iceland) said that the Convention on the Rights of the Child had proven to be an invaluable tool in efforts to further the rights of children all over the world. His delegation remained concerned, however, at the large number of reservations to the Convention. The report of the independent expert had also exposed the horrendous scale and impact of violence against children and had focused the necessary attention on that serious issue as a catalyst for change by identifying areas where concrete action was needed. Iceland welcomed his report (A/62/209) and supported its recommendations, in particular the recommendation to appoint a special representative on violence against children for a period of four years.

32. Iceland also welcomed the report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for children and armed conflict (A/62/228), which emphasized the role of field visits as a key element of her advocacy strategy, and stressed the need for follow-up to commitments made during those visits and for targeted measures against violators who refused to enter into dialogue. It supported the finding of the 10-year strategic review of the study on the impact of armed conflict on children that the most effective way of protecting children's rights was to prevent conflict and promote peace and security.

33. Iceland had adopted a plan of action to strengthen children's rights and support families and was implementing Council of Europe recommendations in support of positive parenting and for the protection of children against sexual exploitation and abuse. His Government emphasized the key importance of the role of UNICEF. He was proud to report that the people of Iceland were among the largest contributors per capita to the work of UNICEF. The children of the world were its future, and the international community had a duty to protect them on all fronts. It had made many commitments to protect children's rights, which must be turned into action.

34. **Ms. Bana** (Iraq) said that if children were not able to enjoy their rights, it would be difficult for them to do so later in life. Despite the fact that Iraqi children suffered from instability and insecurity and were being injured, disabled and killed on a daily basis, they were encouraged by both the Government and their families to persevere in their studies and would be the builders of the new Iraq.

35. A State committee had recommended the ratification of the two Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which had been

ratified by Iraq in 1994. Iraq planned to pass, for the first time, a uniform code on the rights of the child, which were considered the basis of human rights. Its Constitution prohibited the economic exploitation of children and contained other safeguards for families, women and children. Iraq planned to adopt new laws and amend existing ones against all forms of violence against children, to provide more social welfare institutions for children and review their funding and to strive to end all forms of conscription of children. The Government of Iraq urged the international community, especially the United Nations and humanitarian organizations, to cooperate with both governmental and non-governmental institutions in Iraq to ease the suffering of children there and guarantee them a stable environment in which to live.

36. **Mr. Acharya** (India) said that the progress made in achieving the goals identified at the twenty-seventh special session of the General Assembly on children had been unsatisfactory, as illustrated by the fact that, of the world's 2.2 billion children under 15, an estimated 1 billion lived in poverty. Apart from focusing attention on children's rights, there should be support for their development needs, such as adequate food, basic infrastructure, health care and access to education. The regrettable decline in official development assistance reduced the funding that could be invested in children, and his delegation supported the call to bridge the financing gap — the difference between what developing countries needed to invest to achieve their goals and what they could mobilize from their own resources — by raising the assistance level of developed countries.

37. His delegation appreciated the efforts of the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict to present concrete recommendations to improve protection and care of children, and welcomed the efforts of the Peacebuilding Commission to develop mechanisms for the rehabilitation and reintegration of children affected by armed conflict. India had adopted an integrated approach to address the welfare of children, who comprised 41 per cent of its population, the largest child population in the world, and was implementing the world's largest early childhood development programme under the Integrated Child Development Services. It took a proactive stance on the issue of child protection and had undertaken several legislative initiatives in that area. India had conducted a nationwide study on child abuse to determine the magnitude of the problem and was in the process of designing further measures to address the problem of violence against children.

38. Through the Universal Elementary Education Scheme, the Government was making progress towards the achievement of Goal 2 of the Millennium Development Goals, universal primary education, and had resolved to increase public spending on education to at least 6 per cent of GDP. India remained strongly committed to the full eradication of all forms of child labour, beginning with its most exploitative and hazardous forms and moving progressively to its effective elimination. The ban on the employment of children under age 14 as domestic or food service workers in 2006 marked an important milestone in that respect. Its programme to remove children from economic activity was the largest in the world. Lastly, India was working towards the full realization of the goals of "A world fit for children" as well as the related Millennium Development Goals.

39. **Ms. Blitt** (Canada), speaking on behalf of the CANZ delegations (Canada, Australia and New Zealand), stressed the importance that the group attributed to close cooperation between the United Nations, non-governmental organizations, civil society and Governments. Believing that the Convention on the Rights on the Child should constitute the primary standard in the promotion and protection of the rights of the child, she called upon those Member States which had not done so to ratify it and give early consideration to signing and ratifying the Optional Protocols to the Convention. She also welcomed the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol.

40. The report of the independent expert for the United Nations study on violence against children (A/62/209) was crucial, and effective ways must be found to follow up its recommendations at the national, regional and global levels. Although significant advances had been made in developing the normative framework for the protection of children in armed conflict since the Machel Study (A/51/306 and Add.1), she fully supported the recommendations for greater action by Member States to ensure accountability and prevent all violations against children.

41. Progress had been made in monitoring and reporting on children in armed conflict, as called for

under Security Council resolution 1612 (2005), but Member States should maintain their attention on real progress in the field in all situations. Stressing the need to enforce targeted measures against parties to a conflict who persistently committed serious violations, she urged the Security Council to use all the tools at its disposal to that end, such as peacekeeping missions and the naming of offenders. Lastly, she looked forward to participating in the high-level plenary meeting devoted to the follow-up to the outcome of the special session on children in December 2007.

42. **Mr. Vigny** (Switzerland) said that, despite positive developments in the promotion of the rights of the child, there were still major challenges in a number of areas, including the protection of children against abuse, violence and exploitation. Girls, in particular, were subjected to serious human rights violations and, as a State party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and to their respective Protocols, Switzerland was committed to taking all necessary measures to eliminate discriminatory practices against girls and women, at both the national and international level.

43. His country supported the actions of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to ensure gender equality and encouraged the Governments with which it cooperated, as well as civil society organizations, to take steps to eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against girls and women. Switzerland believed that it was the responsibility of Member States to ensure the effective implementation of the recommendations contained in the key report of the independent expert for the United Nations study on violence against children (A/62/209), stressing the importance of ensuring participation by children in the formulation and implementation of policies that affected them.

44. Understanding the independent expert's concern that effective action to end violence against children required high-level leadership, including the appointment of a special representative of the Secretary-General on violence against children, Switzerland was concerned about the number of overlapping mechanisms in the United Nations and believed that UNICEF would be well placed to take up that task, although other international agencies would also have their part to play.

45. **Mr. Pham Hai Anh** (Viet Nam) said that his country was doing its utmost to implement the objectives of The World Fit for Children Action Plan by developing child-friendly legal frameworks and action plans for children and that much progress had been achieved. Both maternal and infant mortality rates had dropped considerably from 2002 to 2005 and the under-five malnutrition rate had also declined. From 2005 onwards, children under six years of age had been entitled to free medical check-ups.

46. Educational facilities had been built throughout the country, including for pre-school education. School enrolment, both at primary and secondary schools, was extremely high: in 2004, it had been 97 per cent and 85 per cent, respectively. The Government was also implementing programmes to promote the education of children from ethnic minorities. Alternative education was being offered to children of school age unable to attend school, and education for children with disabilities had been incorporated into the regular pre-school, primary and secondary education programmes.

47. The national strategy for the protection of children and adolescents aimed to create child protection systems at all levels, focusing on children at risk of abuse and exploitation. In addition, the objective of the current socio-economic plan was to ensure that 90 per cent of children in difficult circumstances were supported and cared for by 2010. New indicators for child protection were being finalized and current monitoring systems strengthened. A child-friendly justice system based on the rights of the child was taking shape. Viet Nam had established a solid legal framework of measures to prevent and address HIV/AIDS among children, including the 2006 law on HIV/AIDS prevention, which contained special provisions on children living with and affected by HIV/AIDS.

48. **Ms. Lund** (Norway) said that progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals related to children had not been even in all countries, with many children throughout the world still being subject to social exclusion, abuse and extreme forms of exploitation. Under the leadership of the Prime Minister of Norway, an international partnership of Governments, the United Nations and private sector

actors, was working strategically towards reaching Goals 4, 5 and 6. Her country was involved in the Education for All movement and would be hosting the high-level group meeting in 2008. It had also initiated, early in 2007, an international process aimed at banning cluster munitions.

49. Multiple forms of discrimination and practices disproportionately affected girls, and due regard should be paid to the independent expert's recommendations calling upon Member States to address all forms of gender discrimination as part of a comprehensive violence prevention strategy. The ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child was not enough; it should be incorporated into national legislation on child protection. That had been done in Norway through the Human Rights Act, and the Convention took precedence over national legislation.

50. Expressing appreciation for the two reports submitted to the Committee in documents (A/62/209 and A/62/228), Norway favoured a strong mandate for an independent high-profile advocate to lead international efforts to promote the prevention and elimination of all violence against children, in cooperation with key organizations and agencies. It also wished to be a partner in the follow-up to the 10-year strategic review. Lastly, the agenda and round tables for the forthcoming high-level plenary meeting devoted to the follow-up to the outcome of the special session on children should address ways of promoting child participation as that was key to successful implementation of many other rights of the child such as the rights to education, health and protection from violence and abuse.

51. **Mr. Rastam** (Malaysia) said that his delegation believed firmly that promotion and protection of the rights of children should be at the forefront of every country's development agenda. While serious efforts were needed at the national level, many problems faced by children were closely related to lack of development and poverty and would not be solved unless the underlying development issues were addressed. Some of those obstacles included lack of resources, debt and the decline in international funding. If there was a true commitment to the promotion and protection of the rights of children, the needs for resources must be addressed.

52. Following the commitment made at the World Summit for Children in 1990, Malaysia had formulated a National Plan of Action for Children in coordination with government agencies, non-governmental organizations and international agencies, in particular UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO). The Plan outlined measures and programmes designed to meet the national goal of achieving the status of a developed nation by 2020. The country's ninth five-year economic development plan for the period 2006-2010 included specific attention to the childcare sector and children's education. Under the Plan, eradication of poverty, reduction of income disparity and improving health care, shelter and water supply would have positive effects for children. The Government was building partnerships and alliances with the private sector and non-governmental organizations to allow for a broader spectrum of ideas and proposals. Best practices from around the world were also taken into consideration.

53. Violence against children could never be justified. Poverty, income inequality, political instability and conflict were among the many factors identified that could increase the risk of violence against children. In addressing the subject, children whose rights were denied due to situations of conflict and the plight of children living under foreign occupation must also be included. Malaysia had developed mechanisms for protecting children from violence, exploitation and abuse, including a 24-hour toll-free hotline to report suspected cases of child abuse. It had also established child protection teams at state and district levels to mobilize community participation. Malaysia reaffirmed its strong commitment to the protection and promotion of the rights of children, as they were the ones who would be expected to ensure the well-being of the community, the nation and the world.

54. **Ms. Halabi** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that building a world fit for children was high on the list of her country's national priorities. As early as 2002 it had begun work on a national strategy for early childhood development, which had led to the idea of a "Children's Parliament" designed to prepare children for participation in the democratic process. The Central Bureau of Statistics had a special unit to compile a national database on children. The national plan for the protection of children protected the rights of children in accordance with international agreements to which the Syrian Arab Republic was a party, which included the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its two

Optional Protocols and International Labour Organization Conventions No. 138 and No. 182 on child labour.

55. The Syrian education system employed the most up-to-date methods to prepare children for a brighter future, and health services were constantly being expanded and upgraded to protect children's health from the womb to adolescence. Regionally, the Syrian Arab Republic took part in various regional Arab meetings on children's issues, and in 2007 had hosted the preparatory meeting for the second Arab Parliamentarian Conference on Children.

56. However, a significant segment of Syrian children was being denied the benefits of that progress because they were living in the Syrian Golan under the Israeli occupation, which, among other things, had closed Arabic language schools and banned Syrian books in its attempt to impose Israeli citizenship and lifestyles on the population. Her delegation was disappointed that the report of the Secretary-General on the follow-up to the special session of the General Assembly on children (A/62/259) did not cover the suffering of children under Israeli occupation in the Syrian Golan and the Palestinian territory, particularly since the outcome documents of the 1995 World Summit on Children and the 2002 special session of the General Assembly on children had covered that subject.

57. **Ms. Assoumou** (Côte d'Ivoire) said that, despite the pledges made at the World Summit for Children in 1990 and the Millennium Development Goals ambitiously set in 2000, children continued to be found on the street, in kitchens, in pornographic films and in situations of armed conflict and landmine zones worldwide. In Côte d'Ivoire, a national plan of action was aimed at suppressing recruitment of child soldiers by the Armed Forces of the Forces Nouvelles and militia groups. Following the Ouagadougou Political Agreement and for the first time since the beginning of the crisis, the school year for the country's children had begun on 17 September 2007.

58. As part of its action in support of children, the Government planned to establish a mechanism to coordinate child protection efforts, elaborate a plan of action to eradicate sexual violence against children, strengthen institutional capacity for the reintegration of child soldiers and introduce a civic service programme for the social readaptation of more than 400,000 young people. Child labour had become a worldwide phenomenon. Her Government, for its part, had made the promotion of children's rights and the family a priority, and the theme chosen for the 2007 National Day against Child Labour had been "Agriculture without child labour". The national plan of action for children, elaborated in line with the outcome of the special session, had yet to be adopted owing to the crisis situation in the country, however measures in support of children, particularly in the areas of health and education, were being implemented with the help of development partners, notably the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

59. Côte d'Ivoire was party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, as well as International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention No. 138 on the minimum age for admission to employment and ILO Convention No. 182 on the worst forms of child labour. In implementation of those Conventions, a decree had been enacted defining dangerous forms of child labour for children under the age of 10. At the subregional level, Côte d'Ivoire was also a party to several bilateral and multilateral agreements to combat trafficking in children, while at the domestic level relevant legislation was in the process of being finalized. Given that poverty was the root cause of all the phenomena under discussion, her delegation urged all developed countries that had not already done so to step up their official development assistance to countries in need.

60. **Ms. Molaroni** (San Marino) said that her Government had always been very active in safeguarding children, in particular children with disabilities. It had ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the first Convention to deal with the rights of children with disabilities, and had been among the first countries to sign the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which addressed the protection of children with disabilities in its article 7. San Marino had a long history of assisting disabled children in receiving an education and had been integrating those children into the school system for 40 years. All teachers received special training in dealing with the challenges disabled students faced. At the same time, specialized day-care centres for children with severe disabilities assisted them in development activities throughout their life cycle. Moreover, all

schools conducted programmes to raise awareness of the difficulties faced by disabled students.

61. Currently, 90 per cent of children with disabilities in developing countries did not attend school. In member countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), disabled students remained under-represented in higher education. Such children often did not enjoy access to health care and risked being denied emergency life-saving treatment. Their mortality rate was as high as 80 per cent in countries where under-5 mortality had on the whole dropped below 20 per cent. Children with disabilities were more likely than others not to be registered at birth, making them more vulnerable to be killed with impunity or to become victims of violence, trafficking or mental, physical or sexual abuse. Accordingly, her Government intended to sign the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse.

62. Children were not always in a position to know their rights as citizens and did not have access to information or participation in the life of their communities, nor did they take part in decisions that concerned them. The international community must ensure that children with disabilities were given equal rights, which could be done only if Governments signed and ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and committed themselves to its full implementation.

63. **Ms. Sapag** (Chile) said that her country's President had launched an early childhood initiative "Chile grows with you", which provided equal opportunities for development to all children in Chile, regardless of their social origin. That programme, unprecedented in Latin America, offered pre-natal care and integral support to all children in their early years and contained actions aimed directly at children from the poorest 40 per cent of households and those in vulnerable situations.

64. As State party to the major international instruments on the rights of children, Chile reiterated its commitment to any initiatives that protected children from violence, including armed conflict or urban and family violence. It particularly supported the view expressed in the Special Representative's report (A/62/228) that the Paris Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups required effective implementation. She also agreed with the recommendation in the independent expert's report (A/62/209) that a special representative of the Secretary-General on violence against children should be appointed to ensure high-level leadership. Noting the independent expert's reference to violence in educational settings in his conclusions, Chile shared that concern and believed that continuing attention should be paid to such issues as violence and bullying in schools, as referred to in General Assembly resolution 61/146.

65. Chile was following with interest the process to adopt the United Nations guidelines for the protection and alternative care of children without parental care. It also acknowledged the important conclusions and recommendations for eliminating discrimination and violence against girls, adopted at the fifty-first session of the Commission on the Status of Women. Aware that a number of countries would be unable to attain Millennium Development Goals 4 and 5 concerning child mortality under five years of age and maternal mortality, Chile particularly welcomed the World Health Organization (WHO) campaign Deliver Now for Woman and Children, which it hoped would be launched at the XVII Ibero-American Summit to be hosted by her country in November 2007.

66. **Mr. Khani Jooyabad** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that his country had consistently invested in a better future for its children. Sound social policies and legislative measures had been introduced for the promotion and protection of their rights, the aim being to ensure that all children enjoyed access to a full range of opportunities, as well as a safe environment so that they could reach their full potential. The Islamic Republic of Iran had recently become a party to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography. Relevant bodies, including children's courts, were involved in the promotion of a harmonious family environment as well as positive discipline and an understanding of child development and children's rights based on educational approaches. A new bill was also being drafted to amend the existing law on child delinquency.

67. The country had recently welcomed visits from the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the independent expert for the United Nations study on violence against children. Each had admired the professionalism of its Juvenile Correction and

Rehabilitation Centre, which the independent expert felt might serve as a role model for South-South cooperation.

68. **Mr. Riofrío** (Ecuador) said that his country had set up a National Council under its Code for Children and Adolescents to serve as a focal point to deal with violence against children. The Council, made up of both State and civil society organizations, was in the process of implementing a 10-year plan with specific objectives concerning child protection. Furthermore, reforms to the Penal Code in 2005 had incorporated crimes such as child pornography, human trafficking and sexual exploitation into Ecuadorian legislation.

69. Ecuador welcomed the recent adoption by the General Assembly of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which recognized the right of indigenous children to protection against economic exploitation and hazardous working conditions and the right of indigenous people to educate their children about their own culture and traditions. His delegation also agreed with the independent expert's recommendation to appoint a special representative of the Secretary-General on violence against children and hoped that the mandate of the high-level advocate would be incorporated into the draft resolution on the rights of the child adopted every year by the Third Committee.

70. Concerned by the growing number of children used in armed conflicts, Ecuador urged all Member States to put an end to such practices by ratifying and implementing the relevant international instruments. In compliance with its international obligations, it was giving high priority to refugee children, most of whom were unaccompanied minors, and working in close cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to integrate those children into their host communities. Lastly, Ecuador looked forward to the meeting devoted to the follow-up to the outcome of the special session on children in December 2007.

71. **Mr. Jeenbaev** (Kyrgyzstan) said that a national programme of action for the suppression of the worst forms of child labour and a national programme for the protection of the rights of children had been elaborated in implementation of Kazakhstan's international commitments on children. In 2006, a Children's Code drawn up with the assistance of UNICEF had been adopted, the first of its kind in Central Asia. A National Council established to coordinate implementation of the Code was chaired by the State Secretary, and the President had recently signed a decree for the protection and support of children.

72. At the local level, social services identified problem families and provided support to homeless children. Currently, some 954,600 children had been identified as being "at risk", of which 854,900 lived below the poverty line. Some 51 per cent of those children were of pre-school age. The international charity Every Child currently provided support to families in two of the country's regions. Centres had been set up within district administrations to help implement national policy on children, and regulations governing implementation of the Children's Code were in the drafting stage. A range of projects were also being implemented to support vulnerable children, including those engaged in child labour, neglected children, orphans, children with special needs and juvenile delinquents.

73. Measures were also being taken to prevent children from ending up in State boarding schools. The efforts of social services were insufficient, however, to solve the problem of homeless children in the country. Kyrgyzstan attached great importance to cooperation with international organizations in support of children's rights and highly appreciated the results of a visit by members of the UNICEF Executive Board. With Fund's help, the juvenile justice system was undergoing reform and alternatives to imprisonment for young people were being devised. His Government was committed to ongoing efforts to raise the status of children in Kyrgyzstan.

74. **Mr. Ndjonkou** (International Labour Organization (ILO)) said that millions of girl and boy labourers and legally employed adolescents continued to face violence at their places of work. According to his organization's figures, 126 million children were subjected to the worst forms of child labour, and some 1.2 million children were trafficked into forced and bonded labour situations, organized begging, plantation work and commercial sexual exploitation. Child domestic labour performed mainly by girls was in its extreme forms tantamount to violence, although it was not recognized by all countries as a hazardous form of child labour.

75. To support States in their implementation of ILO Convention No. 182, the ILO International Programme

on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) had developed a time-bound programme approach offering tools and mechanisms for making a measurable and timely impact in national efforts to combat the scourge. The Programme's target of elaborating national plans of action against child labour by 2008 and eliminating its worst forms by 2016 had been approved by regional declarations in Africa, Asia and the Americas. South-South and horizontal cooperation was another important mechanism for combating child labour, as evidenced by the experience of Portugal, Portuguese-speaking countries in Africa and Brazil, which were exchanging good practices and technical cooperation. The Ministers of Labour of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries had signed a declaration and plan of action on joint action to combat the worst forms of child labour.

76. The use of children in armed conflict as combatants or for auxiliary activities for armed groups such as cooks, porters, or for sexual services, was also a cause for alarm. His organization concentrated on the socio-economic reintegration of such children, as well as on preventing their recruitment. To consolidate years of experience in the field, ILO was publishing a strategic document on the issue to serve as an important tool for implementing the Paris Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups. To help Governments ensure that child labour was adequately addressed in national education and other development policies, ILO encouraged inter-agency cooperation and was an active member of the Global Task Force on Child Labour and Education for All together with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), UNICEF, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.

United Nations A/C.3/62/SR.16

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Summary record of the 16th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 18 October 2007, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Wolfe ..... (Jamaica)

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(a) Promotion and protection of the rights of the child (*continued*)

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07-55094 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 62: Social development (*continued*)

(a) Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (*continued*) (A/62/122 and 168; A/62/71-E/2007/46 and A/C.3/62/L.10)

Draft resolution A/C.3/62/L.10: Implementation of the Outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly

1. **Mr. Hayee** (Pakistan), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that Belarus had joined in sponsoring the draft resolution. The outcomes of the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly had focused on the three main pillars for social development, namely, poverty eradication, employment generation and social integration. More than a decade after the World Summit, much needed to be done in order to realize the goals and commitments contained in the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action.

2. The text of the draft resolution maintained a balance between the three pillars. However, because of the focus of the Commission for Social Development during the 2007-2008 biennium under the theme "Promoting full employment and decent work for all", the draft resolution also highlighted the need for devising strategies to generate full and productive employment for all in order to create an environment conducive to sustainable development.

3. The draft resolution mainly built on the elements agreed in resolution 61/141, adopted by the General Assembly during its sixty-first session; it also drew on language from the ministerial declaration of the high-level segment of the 2006 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council devoted to the theme of productive employment and decent work for all. Some important recommendations from the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/62/122 on follow-up to the implementation of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly had also been incorporated into the draft resolution.

4. **The Chairman** said that Armenia had joined in sponsoring the draft resolution.

(b) Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family (*continued*) (A/62/61-E/2007/7, A/62/61/Add.1-E/2007/7/Add.1, A/62/132, 154, 157 and A/C.3/62/L.8)

Draft resolution A/C.3/62/L.8: Follow-up to the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family and beyond

5. **Mr. Hayee** (Pakistan), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that Belarus had joined in sponsoring the draft resolution. The overall objective of the draft resolution was to ensure that the mandated objectives of the International Year of the Family received the attention they deserved at all levels in order to develop firm measures and approaches to address national priorities for the family as an institution. The current text was based on General Assembly resolution 60/133.

6. The specific intention of the draft resolution was to focus on one of the mandated objectives of the International Year of the Family, to strengthen the capacity of national mechanisms and institutions to formulate, implement and monitor policies in respect of families. The Group of 77 and China believed that capacity development was a vital element for the effective implementation of the objectives of the International Year of the Family, at both the national and regional levels.

7. **The Chairman** said that the Russian Federation and Uzbekistan had joined in sponsoring the draft resolution.

(c) Follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing (*continued*) (A/62/131 and A/C.3/62/L.9)

Draft resolution A/C.3/62/L.9: Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing

8. **Ms. Nawaz** (Pakistan), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that Belarus had joined in sponsoring the draft resolution. While building on the language used in General Assembly resolutions 60/135 and 61/142 and the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, the

draft resolution focused on the process of the first global cycle of review and appraisal of the Madrid Plan of Action, initiated by the Commission for Social Development in 2007.

9. The draft resolution incorporated suggestions from the report of the Secretary-General on the Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing (A/62/131). It also placed emphasis on building capacity to eradicate poverty among older persons, the inclusion of ageing-specific and ageing-mainstreaming efforts in States' review and appraisal of the Madrid Plan of Action and active participation by States in the bottom-up approach of the review and appraisal through sharing ideas, data collection and best practices.

10. **The Chairman** said that the Russian Federation and Uzbekistan had joined in sponsoring the draft resolution.

Agenda item 106: Crime prevention and criminal justice (*continued*) (A/62/126-7 and 84; A/C.3/62/L.11)

Draft resolution A/C.3/62/L.11: United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders

11. **Mr. Babadoudou** (Benin), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the sponsors, said that Belarus had joined in sponsoring the draft resolution. The current draft updated General Assembly resolution 61/182, but the fifth preambular paragraph and paragraphs 2, 5 and 8 introduced new elements, building on previous resolutions of the General Assembly.

12. **The Chairman** said that Belarus wished to join in sponsoring the draft resolution.

Agenda item 107: International drug control (*continued*) (A/62/117 and A/C.3/62/L.13)

Draft resolution A/C.3/62/L.13: International cooperation against the world drug problem

13. **Ms. Feller** (Mexico), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the sponsors, said that Argentina, Andorra, Belarus, Croatia, Colombia, Honduras, Jordan, Jamaica, Monaco, the Republic of Tanzania and Sudan had joined in sponsoring the draft resolution. Welcoming the decision by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs to convene a high-level segment to assess the implementation of the declaration and the measures adopted by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session, the draft resolution identified the obstacles still facing the international community in its efforts to confront the world drug problem.

14. **The Chairman** said that Armenia, Botswana, Bolivia, Chile, China, Dominican Republic, Georgia, Haiti, Indonesia, Iran, Mali, Moldova, Montenegro, Nigeria, Paraguay, Peru, San Marino, Senegal, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Uruguay, Uzbekistan and Zambia also wished to join in sponsoring the draft resolution.

Agenda item 106: Crime prevention and criminal justice (*continued*) (A/62/84 and A/62/126-7 and A/C.3/62/L.2 and L.3)

Draft resolution A/C.3/62/L.2: Technical assistance for implementing the internationa' conventions and protocols relating to terrorism

15. **The Chairman** said that the draft resolution had been recommended for adoption by the Economic and Social Council.

16. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee), presenting a statement of programme budget implications in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, said that, in order to implement the activities requested by paragraphs 1 to 6 of the draft resolution, the United Nations Office on Drug and Crime (UNODC) would need to undertake an increased level of technical assistance to countries requesting such assistance and conduct a number of specialized training sessions. UNODC would also be required to cover in-depth increased substantive elements in the overall counter-terrorism programme of activities; elaborate an increased number of specialized technical tools and publications, and ensure the inclusion, in its technical assistance activities in counter-terrorism, of elements necessary for building national capacity in order to strengthen criminal justice systems and the rule of law. Furthermore, it would also coordinate the expanded work with CTC/CTED; and (vi) coordinate and cooperate with partner entities at international, regional and subregional levels.

17. The requests made in paragraphs 1 to 6 of the draft resolution would require an increase in the level of technical assistance provided in order to implement the international conventions and protocols related to terrorism, as well as an increase in the level of

voluntary contributions for that purpose. He recalled that in 2006 voluntary contributions received for activities related to the Terrorism Prevention Branch had amounted to $6.1 million. The extrabudgetary requirements for 2007 were estimated at $8 million. Consequently, if the General Assembly adopted draft resolution A/C.3/62/L.2, the implementation of the activities set out in paragraphs 1 to 6 of the draft resolution would be subject to the availability of extrabudgetary resources.

18. With regard to the provisions of paragraph 8, he pointed out that the proposed programme budget for the 2008-2009 biennium, under section 16 on international drug control, crime and terrorism prevention and criminal justice, amounted to $33,615,000 at 2006-2007 rates, representing an increase of $776,600, or 2.4 per cent as compared to the 2006-2007 biennium. The proposal reflected the establishment of a P-3 post in the Terrorism Prevention Branch.

19. He drew attention to the provisions of section VI of General Assembly resolution 45/248 B of 21 December 1990, which reaffirmed that the Fifth Committee was the appropriate Main Committee of the Assembly entrusted with the responsibility for administrative and budgetary matters, and also reaffirmed the role of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions in that regard. He also drew attention to paragraph 67 of the first report of the Advisory Committee on the proposed programme budget for 2000-2001 (A/54/7), which stated that the use of the phrase "within existing resources" or similar language in resolutions had a negative impact on the implementation of activities. Efforts should therefore be made to avoid the use of that phrase in resolutions and decisions.

20. **The Chairman** said he took it that the Committee wished to adopt draft resolution A/C.3/62/L.2 without a vote.

21. *It was so decided.*

22. **Mr. Hayee** (Pakistan) said that although his delegation had joined the consensus, he wished to make some observations about the draft resolution. The fifth preambular paragraph of the draft resolution appeared to create a new "technical assistance" mandate for the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force. In the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, the Task Force already had a mandate to ensure coordination and coherence within the United Nations system but did not have a mandate to provide technical assistance to Member States. His delegation could therefore not support the granting of that mandate to the Task Force.

23. In paragraph 1 of the draft resolution, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime was asked to provide technical assistance in close consultation with the Counter-Terrorism Committee and its Executive Directorate. UNODC was guided in its work by the General Assembly and had a clear mandate. Similar references were made in paragraphs 4 and 6 of the draft resolution. His delegation did not believe that the Executive Directorate of the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTED) should play a subservient role to UNODC, and therefore wished to reserve its position on those paragraphs.

24. In the eighth line of paragraph 5, UNODC was given an additional mandate to take into account programmes for building national capacity. Overall national capacity-building was a State responsibility. UNODC could indeed contribute to national needs as and when requested to do so by States, but it did not have a mandate to formulate or implement an overarching national capacity-building strategy.

25. Line 6 of paragraph 6 also created a doubt as to how UNODC could enhance legal cooperation among States, when such subjects fell within the domain of States themselves. UNODC could provide technical assistance, and it would be preferable to add the word "through" before "good" in the sixth line.

26. Paragraph 8 requested the Secretary-General to provide sufficient resources to UNODC for its activities. His delegation hoped that such a request would not be tantamount to a blank check for UNODC activities, and would not be binding on the Fifth Committee when it considered budgetary implications for UNODC. Pakistan took it that the report requested in paragraph 10 of the draft resolution would not represent a substitute for the requests made to the Secretary-General in paragraph 3 (c) of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy contained in General Assembly resolution 60/288.

Draft resolution A/C.3/62/L.3: Follow-up to the Eleventh United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and preparations for the Twelfth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

27. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee), presenting a statement of programme budget implications in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, said that the resources required to provide for (i) assistance with the preparation and servicing of the preparatory meetings of the Twelfth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice; (ii) specialized expertise to prepare technical research papers on the four substantive agenda items of the Twelfth Congress; (iii) participation of the least developed countries in the regional preparatory meetings for the Twelfth Congress; and (iv) the travel of staff to provide substantive servicing for the four regional preparatory meetings of the Twelfth Congress had been included in the proposed programme budget for the 2008-2009 biennium.

28. **Ms. Maierá** (Brazil) said that the Government of Brazil had offered to host the Twelfth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in 2010, and that the Permanent Mission of Brazil intended to send an official communication to the Secretary-General of the United Nations in that regard. Her delegation would highly appreciate the support of the members of the Third Committee for her Government's offer.

29. **Ms. Al-Thani** (Qatar) said that following consultations with the delegation of Brazil on the issue of the Twelfth Congress, which the Governments of both Brazil and Qatar had proposed to host in 2010, her delegation had agreed to support the offer made by the Government of Brazil. At the same time, the Government of Brazil had agreed to support the Government of Qatar's invitation to host the third session of the Conference of States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption.

30. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee), pursuant to the offer made by the delegation of Brazil, proposed that the square brackets in the first line of paragraph 6 of draft resolution A/C.3/62/L.3 should be deleted and replaced by the name of Brazil.

31. **The Chairman** said he took it that the Committee wished to adopt draft resolution contained in A/C.3/62/L.3, as orally revised, without a vote.

32. *It was so decided.*

Agenda item 66: Promotion and protection of the rights of children (*continued*) (A/62/297 and 319 and A/C.3/62/2)

(a) Promotion and protection of the rights of children (*continued*) (A/62/182, 209 and 228)

(b) Follow-up to the outcome of the special session on children (*continued*) (A/62/259)

33. **Mr. Muburi-Muita** (Kenya) said that his delegation was committed to the objectives and principles set forth in the Declaration and Plan of Action adopted at the twenty-seventh special session of the General Assembly. Investing in and respecting the rights of children was the foundation for sustainable and equitable development, poverty eradication and peace and security. Kenya had been among the first States to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its two optional protocols and was actively incorporating them into its national legislation. It had also ratified the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the African Child. It had enacted legislation for the protection of children from sexual abuse in 2006. His Government realized that Kenyan society retained certain customary practices which relegated children to secondary status in decision-making, even in matters which affected them, and that those practices were an impediment to the full realization of their rights. The Government had made deliberate efforts to raise awareness of children's rights and children's fundamental role in shaping the nation's future.

34. The Government was determined to provide universal, decent and affordable health care. Its national reproductive health strategy continued to provide a framework for the promotion of safe motherhood and child survival, including free health services at public health institutions for all children under five. Kenya had also adopted a national health plan which integrated the Millennium Development Goals. The provision of treated mosquito nets, public health initiatives and more medical facilities and personnel had resulted in a significant decline in the rate of child and maternal mortality caused by malaria. Kenya's most dramatic success in achieving the Goals and the principles and objectives of a world fit for

children had been in the area of education. The introduction of universal free primary education in 2003 had resulted in an increase in enrolment in primary school of about 2 million children. Nevertheless, the Government was working to enrol more than 1 million children of school-going age who remained out of school, including through the establishment of boarding and mobile primary schools among the pastoralist communities, the integration of informal schools into the educational system and the introduction of school meal programmes.

35. The ravages of poverty and of HIV/AIDS had resulted in high numbers of orphaned and other vulnerable children. The Government had adopted a national policy and plan of action on orphans and vulnerable children which provided a framework for improving the plight of disadvantaged children. Kenya believed that global collaboration was essential for the promotion of the well-being of children, without which the ideals of universal peace and security, the ultimate challenge of the international community, could not be achieved.

36. **Ms. Cavaliere de Nava** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that her Government gave top priority to the best interests of children. The Government had recognized children and adolescents as persons having rights which must be safeguarded by the State, the family and society and was undertaking reform to strengthen the protection of those rights. It had also brought its domestic legislation into line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Its national policy to promote and protect the rights of children and adolescents included comprehensive family support for low-income households and working mothers, school nutrition programmes, vaccination drives, school enrolment and preschool education programmes, birth registration campaigns and measures to combat sexual abuse. The Government recognized that children who lived in poverty were unable to exercise their rights and participate as fully fledged members of society. It was therefore committed to eliminating the structural causes of poverty, inequity and violence and of the violation of the human rights of children and adolescents.

37. Venezuela condemned all forms of violence against children and adolescents and the use of children in armed conflict and had become a party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its two Optional Protocols. It had also ratified the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. The Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela would continue to work to promote the rights of children and adolescents and ensure that they benefited from an inclusive society based on justice, solidarity and equality.

38. **Mr. Myint** (Myanmar) said that despite progress made and the high number of national plans of action and goals worldwide, aid flows had not reached a level which would enable States to invest more in children. The international community must therefore give the issue greater attention. His Government had been making progress towards reducing the under-five mortality rate since 1990. Under its five-year plan, it was making strenuous efforts to improve child health and hoped to reduce the rate by two thirds by 2015. It was currently expanding immunization coverage in cooperation with the World Health Organization and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Maternal mortality remained a problem in Myanmar. The Government had therefore expanded safe motherhood initiatives and provided for essential obstetrical care, with an emphasis on antenatal care. It had also made concerted efforts to increase access to primary education and to promote the retention rate. Net enrolment in and the proportion of pupils completing primary school had increased sharply between 1990 and 2005.

39. The report of the independent expert for the United Nations study on violence against children (A/62/209) had raised global awareness of the problem. The appointment of a Special Representative to provide high-level leadership in implementing the recommendation set forth in the report would be a step in the right direction. Violence against children was not condoned by any religion. In Myanmar, all strata of society expressed aversion to violence against children. The report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict (A/62/228) had also drawn the attention of the international community to the use of children in conflict situations. His Government had worked with the Special Representative during her visit and with the United Nations country team on the modalities of a monitoring and reporting mechanism on the protection of children's rights. The Government was fully committed to preventing the recruitment of children

under 18 into the armed forces. The age requirement was strictly enforced at military recruiting centres and training establishments.

40. Myanmar welcomed the emergence of new partnerships to enhance the global response to HIV/AIDS. A national committee had been established to coordinate efforts to combat the disease, including advocacy, awareness-raising and prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV. Those activities were being carried out in collaboration with relevant ministries, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). As a result, the incidence of HIV/AIDS had decreased between 2000 and 2005. His Government was making every effort to build a world fit for children and called for increased international cooperation to help it to achieve its goals.

41. **Mr. Sow** (Senegal) said that the factors hindering the full development of children in Africa lay principally in the area of protection. People, particularly in rural communities, had a low level of awareness of children's rights. Many international agreements which had been ratified were poorly applied at the State level. Many families, faced with poverty, tended to use their daughters as a means of survival. Inadequate labour legislation governing the domestic work of children and the low level of information concerning domestic workers encouraged abuse of girls and young women. Harmful traditional practices such as early marriage and female genital mutilation were major problems. Street children often fell prey to sex tourism, human trafficking and pornography or became involved in armed conflicts. Within that very vulnerable segment of society, children with disabilities were particularly exposed to abuse and sexual exploitation. Another vulnerable group was HIV/AIDS orphans, who had little or no access to health care.

42. Senegal had made significant advances in the area of the education, health and protection of the rights of children. It had been promoting maternal and child health through prenatal care in major urban centres and expanded vaccination and nutrition programmes. Concerning protection of the rights of the child, it had established a children's parliament, which offered children a good forum for expressing their interests. Legislation dating back to 2001 prohibited excision. Efforts were also being made to register children with the Public Records Office. The Government was taking steps to address child begging and modernize Koranic schools. It sought to increase awareness about national and international instruments concerning the rights of the child, harmonize national legislation with the relevant ratified international agreements, strengthen subregional protection against trafficking in children and eliminate the sexual abuse and exploitation of children. It was strengthening primary school education and vocational training. It was also tackling HIV/AIDS through its national programme in collaboration with development partners. The Government had taken robust action to address the problem of fistula, including free care and initiatives to prohibit forced marriages. It would be submitting a draft resolution on the issue, which it hoped would enjoy unanimous support.

43. **Mr. Christian** (Ghana) said that the forthcoming review of the commitments set out in the document entitled "A world fit for children" would surely create the momentum for a stronger response by Governments and other stakeholders to the challenges involved in achieving the goals set at the General Assembly special session on children.

44. His delegation welcomed the report by the independent expert for the United Nations study on violence against children, which had catalysed action at the global level. Ghana, which attached great importance to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, had developed various strategies to prevent all forms of violence against children. Some Governments, however, although committed to combating such violence, were handicapped by institutional weaknesses. Much more could be achieved if resource allocation were increased for activities relating to children.

45. His delegation commended the report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and the work of the Security Council in monitoring its resolution 1612 (2005). Collaborative efforts by all the individuals and bodies concerned, and by children themselves, had resulted in admirable advances, such as the introduction of child protection advisers to United Nations peacekeeping forces. It was, however, a cause for alarm that, in many situations of conflict, there remained a considerable distance between strict child protection standards and the actual situation of children on the ground. Rape was used as a weapon of war;

children, particularly girls, were the victims of sexual violence. Moreover, the climate of impunity was flourishing. In countries where the continuing recruitment of children was no longer a central issue, their reintegration in society remained problematic. The Special Representative's report highlighted emerging issues of concern, such as the security of camps for internally displaced persons and refugees, where children were most susceptible to recruitment and other serious violations of their rights. His delegation urged all States that had not already done so to sign and implement the relevant international instruments. The negative impact of armed conflict on children could not be underestimated and the international community must intensify its efforts to protect them and mitigate their suffering from the atrocities of war.

46. **Ms. Pi** (Uruguay) welcomed the fact that the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols had been widely ratified. The virtue of the Convention was that it applied to every aspect of the life and development of children, recognizing their rights at the hands of the State and society. Such recognition inevitably had a bearing on all State activities. Public policy should thus give priority to children, establishing mechanisms to promote their development and mitigate the effects of economic or social restrictions. Her Government had amended existing legislation to that end and aimed to promote a concept of the child as a subject of law rather than a subject of State protection, with a view to encouraging greater involvement by children and the independent exercise of their rights.

47. Despite the progress that had been achieved, her delegation regretted that international plans to promote children's rights had not been accompanied by the necessary investment and that international aid flows were still too low for the Millennium Development Goals to be achieved. The international community should redouble its efforts to tackle the violence, exploitation and abuse suffered by children, various forms of child labour, the devastating impact of HIV/AIDS and the particular vulnerability of children in poverty, in armed conflict and in natural disasters. In that connection, she paid a tribute to the work of UNICEF.

48. Her delegation welcomed the recommendations contained in the report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and hoped that, given its sensitivity, the topic could be assessed in an inclusive and open manner, so that every country would have the opportunity to contribute its point of view. Her delegation also fully endorsed the recommendations contained in the report of the independent expert for the United Nations study on violence against children. It was, however, concerned that, while some progress had been made in combating violence in educational establishments, trafficking in persons and sexual or commercial exploitation, the situation remained poor with regard to domestic violence, the treatment of victims in the hospitals and the courts or violence perpetrated by agents of the State. There could be no justification for any form of violence. Only through cooperation based on education and understanding would it be possible to bring about the necessary cultural and social changes. Confrontation and coercion led only to greater division and tension. The independent experts' study highlighted the terrible levels of violence suffered by children worldwide, which should be tackled by means of a multidisciplinary strategy operating at the national, regional and international level. Her delegation therefore fully supported the recommendation that a special representative on violence against children should be appointed, with a mandate that covered human rights, child protection, welfare, development, public health and education.

49. **Ms. Štiglic** (Slovenia) said that child protection was given priority in her country's foreign policy. Her delegation therefore welcomed a number of significant developments over the past few years, particularly with regard to the widespread ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the growing number of signatories to the two Optional Protocols and the ratification of a number of International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions. The fifth anniversary of the Optional Protocols must act as a catalyst for renewed efforts to promote and protect children's rights at every level. In that connection, her delegation supported the appointment of a special representative of the Secretary-General on violence against children.

50. The work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and of her predecessor had achieved real progress. Important steps had also been taken in the fight against impunity, with the entry into force of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, which defined the recruitment of children to armed forces as a war crime.

In view of the impact of conflict on the psychological and social well-being of children, who were often displaced from their homes or separated from their families, the Government, the city of Ljubljana and the NGO Slovene Philanthropy had established the Together Foundation, which worked for the psychological and social rehabilitation of children affected by armed conflicts, post-war poverty or other negative social processes in the western Balkans, Iraq or the North Caucasus by strengthening local structures in the field. It was crucial that children should be reintegrated in their own communities.

51. **Mr. Prommoon** (Thailand), speaking as a youth delegate, said that much had been achieved: child mortality rates had fallen, life expectancy had gone up and young people were more educated than ever before. The world in general had become a less violent place. The progress was, however, not fast enough. The way to speed up the process of change was to empower children and develop their rights. Like almost every other country, Thailand had acceded to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its two Optional Protocols. Yet, in the face of the fact that young people accounted for half those unemployed in the world and half those newly infected with HIV/AIDS, promises must be matched by action.

52. If the Millennium Development Goal of reducing child mortality was not achieved by 2015, 4.6 million people would have been deprived of their right to life. It was the duty of the international community to provide children with basic services such as immunization, nutrition and sanitation. A strong family was also crucial to the development of adolescents. His Government had formulated a national youth policy for the years 2002-2011, emphasizing the role of the family.

53. Although young people were, by and large, better educated than ever, unequal access to education was still a glaring problem in many societies. Proper investment in education must be made in every country: the best way to advance a nation was by its possession of a large pool of people equipped with the moral consciousness of responsible citizenship, along with the requisite knowledge and skills. Greater investment was also needed to enable young people to get involved in the global economy. Entrepreneurial and vocational training was required. Access to microfinance should be provided.

54. Young people needed to be involved in the decision-making process. All States should therefore include youth delegates in their delegations to the General Assembly.

55. **Mr. Xhaferraj** (Albania) said that his Government, which had signed the Stabilization and Association Agreement with the European Union in 2006, was striving to introduce and implement European Union standards, particularly with regard to the promotion and protection of human rights. The Convention on the Rights of the Child was a crucial international document in that regard. New legislation or amendments to existing legislation had therefore been introduced in order to improve the living conditions and legal status of children in Albania. The Government had ratified the most important international instruments for the protection of children, including, most recently, the two Optional Protocols to the Convention.

56. In 2006, a study had been conducted on violence against children in Albania. The study had provided guidance to all the parties concerned on how to work with and for children. The National Strategy for Children, the National Strategy for the Fight against Trafficking in Human Beings, the National Roma Strategy and the National Strategy for Social Services were being implemented and updated. Issues relating to the promotion and protection of human rights could not, however, be tackled by Government alone but required extensive consultation with and involvement by society at large. Government institutions had therefore established constructive cooperation with NGOs involved in children's rights. NGOs' contributions to the domestic human rights debate would enhance the protection of the rights of the children of Albania.

57. The Government cooperated with UNICEF and other specialized agencies in their work within the country and commended the efforts of the international community to promote and protect the rights of children worldwide. There was, however, an urgent need for existing capacities to be strengthened.

58. **Ms. Kavun** (Ukraine) said that violence against children bred societies that accepted the unacceptable: that children could be beaten, tortured or humiliated. No State was exempt. In Eastern Europe, poverty pushed more and more children on to the streets, where they faced appalling dangers, including gang violence,

child prostitution and drug abuse; yet about half of them were thought to be under 13. A disturbing gap remained between the standards and initiatives developed for the protection of children and the atrocities that were still perpetrated against children by parties to armed conflict.

59. Her Government was particularly concerned about the impact of the Chernobyl disaster on children's health, the spread of HIV/AIDS and trafficking in women and children. Policies regarding children had been significantly strengthened. Additional legislative and practical incentives had facilitated identifying appropriate activities for protecting the rights of children, including orphans and children deprived of parental care. A national programme for preventing children's homelessness and abandonment in the period 2006-2010 had started successfully. A national plan of action for implementing the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in the period 2006-2016 had been launched in 2007.

60. Ukraine took steps to eradicate trafficking in children, child prostitution and child pornography. Sexual exploitation was encouraged by economic factors. Street children, juvenile victims of domestic violence, orphans and the inmates of children's homes were most vulnerable. Accordingly, the best way of preventing children from trafficking was to strengthen the role of the family environment. Therefore the family should be protected and assisted.

61. The Ukrainian Government's efforts would not have been successful without assistance from foreign government authorities, the United Nations and other international bodies, funds, programmes and civil society organizations. Ukraine would continue to cooperate with UNICEF, the United Nations Human Rights Council, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), NGOs and civil society to ensure coherence and efficiency in the promotion of the rights of children. In 2006, the situation regarding exploited children in Ukraine had been assessed by the United Nations Human Rights Council Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

62. **Mr. Chabar** (Morocco) reiterated his Government's indignation at the plight of many children in the world. Every year, millions of children died as a result of malnutrition, disease, armed conflict, exploitation or violence or suffered as victims of trafficking, prostitution and pornography. Accordingly, Morocco had recently announced its adherence to the Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups ("Paris Commitments"), which aimed at eliminating the recruitment of children by armed groups or forces. Moreover, Morocco had formulated a coherent strategy to promote the rights of children, with direct civil society involvement. In March 2006, his Government had adopted a national 2006-2015 plan of action for children. The plan provided for new monitoring mechanisms, creation of child protection units and organization of data-collection activities regarding the fulfilment of child-related commitments made during the United Nations General Assembly special session on children, held in 2002, and the attainment of the relevant Millennium Development Goals. Funds had been earmarked for groups combating violence against children and early marriage. Legal and psychological counselling units and shelters had been set up for women victims of violence. Specific programmes had been developed for child workers and street children and initiatives had been taken to combat illiteracy among rural girls.

63. Preventive and educational activities included a national programme for the promotion of a human rights culture in schools, a national campaign for education in equal rights at the high school level, measures for eradicating illiteracy among children aged 8-16, specific programmes targeting children in difficult situations and steps to improve the enrolment of school-age girls in rural areas. A human development initiative launched in May 2006 by King Mohammed VI comprehensively addressed poverty, social exclusion, resource mobilization and promotion of children's rights. Improving the lot of children required parallel action to eliminate poverty. Moreover, the family code had been amended better to reflect the interests of children, in the framework of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Labour Code, under which the minimum employment age had been raised to 15, banned dangerous work for children under 18. Lastly, the Criminal Code had been reformed in 2003 to include provisions against various forms of sexual exploitation, raising the age of criminal responsibility to 18 and establishing special courts for minors.

64. **Ms. Asmady** (Indonesia) said that children's rights should be implemented as part of human rights in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols, the Millennium Development Goals and the outcome of the twenty-seventh special session of the General Assembly. It was therefore encouraging that 193 States had ratified or acceded to the Convention, that a growing number of countries sought to achieve the goals contained in the document "A world fit for children" and that children's rights were one of the main thrusts of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Despite those advances and some tangible progress in the areas of health, education and human rights, the goals set in the various United Nations instruments were far from being fully accomplished. Rectifying that situation would require greater political resolve and investment. Developing countries should be able to rely on support from the international community. The financing commitments set out in the Monterrey Consensus must be fulfilled. Based on the findings of the Machel study, the international community should put greater effort into ending the recruitment of children.

65. The family was the primary source of care for children and should therefore be strengthened. To that end, building the economy and safeguarding economic stability had been priorities for Indonesia. The Indonesian Government continued to increase the annual budget for education with a view to providing quality instruction, and had developed operational assistance and scholarship programmes for poor students. The national education programme had raised the level of scholastic achievement. Access of poor communities to health services was improving. Inter alia, the Government had created a health insurance programme for the poor and helped to alleviate the costs of medicine. More medical personnel was assigned to isolated areas. However, high maternal mortality and the alarming spread of HIV/AIDS required greater efforts. Limited treatment capacity called for further support by the international community, including the provision of antiretroviral drugs.

66. Certain areas in Indonesia required particular attention. Indonesia intended to cooperate further with the international community in rehabilitating the Aceh province, which had been devastated by the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster in 2004. Indonesia also focused on the development of its eastern provinces. Current priorities included improving the food supply, promoting a community-based economy, providing adequate health and education services and expanding basic infrastructures.

67. Action with regard to children should comprise family-based prevention strategies to reduce violence against children, with an enhanced role for international cooperation and United Nations country programmes. Awareness should be further raised in the legislative and executive branches of Government, including through the use of the Inter-Parliamentary Union handbook entitled "Eliminating violence against children". Moreover, United Nations agencies should better coordinate their capacity-building activities to assist Governments in attaining the Millennium Development Goals and improving the condition of children. Partnerships among Governments, United Nations agencies and civil society organizations were essential. UNICEF's child protection support should address new challenges, such as natural disasters and climate change. Lastly, the General Assembly should take a more pro-active role on the issue of children and armed conflict.

68. **Ms. Almuhairy** (United Arab Emirates) said that her country had adopted a comprehensive development policy focused on the human being, particularly children and youth. The State had enacted legislation and taken measures in that spirit. Her country, keenly interested in contributing to international partnership, had launched in September 2007 the "Dubai Care" campaign, whose first phase aimed at securing education for 1 million children in developing countries, particularly in Asia and Africa.

69. At the national level, the parties concerned had signed in April 2007 an agreement to extend — with UNICEF cooperation — the programme on child jockeys to the United Arab Emirates, as part of the country's action to combat human trafficking. In the areas of promoting the well-being of children and protecting their rights, her country had managed to reduce the mortality rate for children under five to 8 per thousand, ensure that 95 per cent of children were immunized against childhood diseases and completely eradicate polio and malaria. The rate of enrolment in elementary schools for both sexes had attained 86 per cent. Social care was available for orphans and children of unknown parents. Up-to-date methods were applied to the rehabilitation of children with

disabilities and special needs. Those children were provided with medical, social and psychological care. Her country was one of the main centres for treating autism in the Middle East. Her Government had set up centres for protecting and assisting abused or neglected children and specialized units for reforming juvenile delinquents according to modern methods of rehabilitation and reintegration.

70. **Ms. Bungundu** (Nigeria) said that, despite reported improvement, her delegation was preoccupied with the situation of children affected by armed conflict. Concerted efforts by all agencies responsible for relevant dialogue, rehabilitation and reintegration were necessary to prevent abuse during and after the conflict.

71. In Nigeria, progress had been made towards the full incorporation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child into domestic law. Since the previous session of the General Assembly, six more federal states had ratified the Convention, and steps were being taken for its effective implementation. In dealing with HIV/AIDS, measures taken by the Nigerian Government in addition to the national plan of action for orphans and vulnerable children included cooperation with international development partners with a view to providing necessary services and care for affected and other vulnerable children.

72. Measures taken to prevent violence against children included building law-enforcement capacities appropriately to handle children in conflict with the law; setting up children's desks at police stations; mainstreaming child rights issues into the police training curriculum; establishing family courts; and providing voluntary services for young delinquents. The findings and recommendations of the United Nations Study on Violence against Children were broadly disseminated, while legislation on trafficking in persons had been amended to include provisions against child abuse and child labour. The competent ministries channelled savings from debt relief granted to Nigeria to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals related to children's rights.

73. **Mr. Buff** (International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)) said that, although all children affected by armed conflict gave cause for concern, girls were particularly vulnerable to abuse because of their sex and age. Combatants could force them to cook, fetch water and firewood or clean for them. Moreover, girls were exposed to abduction, forced marriage, sexual abuse or sexual exploitation. Since children were best protected by staying with their families, it was essential in times of war to protect the entire civilian population, and especially to keep families together.

74. ICRC activities to combat the recruitment of children by armed forces and armed groups included making representations to all parties to a given conflict, raising awareness of international humanitarian law and other fundamental rules, contributing to the development of new humanitarian rules and providing direct services for children. ICRC welcomed the increased focus on the recruitment and use of children in armed conflicts both within the United Nations and among certain States and armed groups. It had participated in drafting the recently adopted Paris Commitments, which placed great emphasis on girls recruited or used by warring parties. ICRC expected many more States to adhere to the Paris Commitments; urged all States to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict and to enforce its provisions; and hoped that international law would eventually include a total ban on all forms of recruitment — voluntary or involuntary — of persons under 18.

75. That children should suffer the effects of armed conflict and other situations of violence was a stain on humanity. ICRC was pleased to see that children were currently being demobilized, even in conflicts that had not yet been settled. However, although they often accounted for approximately 40 per cent of the children recruited, the percentage of girls benefiting from demobilization processes was much lower. Presumably, many remained behind as wives or to fulfil other domestic roles, and hence were not regarded as being child soldiers. Moreover, many girls who had managed to leave armed forces or groups did not wish to go through an official disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme for fear of stigmatization. The plight of recruited girls should receive high priority.

The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.